

REMARKS

Claims 1-15, as amended, appear in this application for the Examiner's review and consideration. Claim 11 has been amended to recite "nonwoven fabric according to claim 6", as suggested by the Examiner. Previous claims 24-27 are now presented as new claims 12-15. As no new matter is introduced by these changes, the entry of the amendment at this time is warranted.

Claims 1-15 are rejected as being based upon a defective reissue declaration, which fails to identify at least one error that is relied upon to support the reissue application. In response, a supplemental reissue declaration is submitted herewith, specifying errors upon which the reissue is based. Therefore, the rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claims 11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In response, claim 11 has been amended to recite "nonwoven fabric according to claim 6", as suggested by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully submits that the manner in which the nonwoven fabric of claim 15 is produced is clear because claim 1, from which claim 14 depends, recites the detailed process for producing the nonwoven fabric. Therefore, the rejection is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent No. 5,500,281 to Srinivasan et al. (referred to hereafter as "Srinivasan"). Srinivasan discloses an absorbent, flushable, bio-degradable, and medically-safe nonwoven fabric suitable for use as wraps, wipes, absorbent pads, composed of from 2% to 10% by weight of untreated, water-soluble polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) fibers that are heat-bonded to a matrix of absorbent fibers. Since Srinivasan is directed to a non-woven fabric formed by a carding process, as opposed to the air-laying process recited in the present invention, Srinivasan does not teach or suggest the present invention. Furthermore, the web disclosed in Srinivasan is structurally different from the air-laid web of the present invention, which does not include a laminar structure and which provides a lower density and increased softness than a carded web. Therefore, the rejection over Srinivasan is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that claims 1-10 and 24-26 (now 12-14) are indicated as allowable if the rejection based upon the defective reissue declaration is overcome. As the rejection is overcome, these claims should be allowed.

In view of the above, it is believed that the claim amendments are presented in the proper format and the entire application is now in condition for allowance. In the event that the Examiner does not agree that all claims are now allowable, a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues in an effort to expedite the eventual allowance of this application. Please contact the undersigned with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date


Allan A. Fanucci (Reg. No. 30,256)

WINSTON & STRAWN LLP
Customer No. 28765
212-294-3311